



September 19th, 2014

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San Ramon City Council
222 Camino Ramon
San Ramon, CA 94583

RE: Official opposition by San Ramon of Creekside Memorial Cemetery

Dear Mayor Clarkson and San Ramon City Council,

Save Mount Diablo (SMD) is a non-profit conservation organization founded in 1971 which acquires land for addition to parks on and around Mount Diablo and monitors land use planning which might affect protected lands. We build trails, restore habitat, and are involved in environmental education. In 1971 there was just one park on Mount Diablo totaling 6,778 acres; today there are almost 50 parks and preserves around Mount Diablo totaling 110,000 acres. We include more than 8,000 donors and supporters.

We would first like to thank Mayor Clarkson and Vice Mayor O'Loane for their initiative and dedication to providing and receiving information from hundreds of members of the public regarding the proposed Creekside Memorial Cemetery (cemetery) proposed by Corrie Development Corporation, located just east of San Ramon between Camino Tassajara and the Windemere neighborhood of San Ramon.

More than 200 residents attended the informational forum the city sponsored on June 24th, and more than 450 members of the public attended an August 16th hike through San Ramon Open Space to the proposed cemetery site. These events allowed hundreds of San Ramon residents to receive information about the proposed cemetery, as well as share their thoughts on the project with Mayor Clarkson, Vice Mayor O'Loane and Contra Costa County staff. These hundreds of residents have made it very clear that the community of San Ramon is overwhelmingly opposed to the Cemetery.

We fully realize that the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors is the decision-making body for this proposed project. However, the residents of San Ramon and other communities in the area would clearly be impacted by this cemetery. Therefore, we feel that the elected officials of San Ramon have good reason to influence the Board of Supervisors to deny the land use permit and other required approvals for the Cemetery.

There have been many changes in the area in the past ten years. A clear and effective way to influence the County Board of Supervisors would be for the City of San Ramon to rescind the resolution it passed in December 2005 which stated support for the cemetery, and to take a stance officially opposing the project.

San Ramon and its surrounding areas have experienced tremendous change in this past decade. Most of the Windemere community and East Dublin were not yet built, and the Monterosso and Alamo Creek neighborhoods east of Danville were completely absent. Protected open space in the area has also grown since 2005, including the Hidden Valley and Kawar Valley Open Space areas, the East Bay Regional Park District's Doolan Canyon-Tassajara Hills Regional Preserve and Brown Ranch mitigation lands.

One of the most significant changes that have taken place in the Tri-Valley are dramatic increases in ethnic diversity. It was clear at the forum, the hike and on a petition¹ signed by more than 3,000 local residents that new neighbors to the proposed project consider it extremely culturally insensitive.

The proposed cemetery would negatively affect these diverse new communities and protected open space areas in a variety of ways, ranging from depleting scarce water resources—the EIR reveals that the site produces less than half the water the project needs, which could dramatically affect ranching and agricultural users downstream who are already trucking water in this drought--to threatening proposed open space connections with existing parks and preserves, to causing increased traffic and placing a culturally unacceptable land use next to local families. As the comments on the cemetery EIRs explain, this project would result in a large number of serious negative effects on human communities, wildlife, and scenery. Even the EIR itself acknowledges that some of the most serious impacts, such as depletion of groundwater supply, are significant and unavoidable.

Due to the overwhelming opposition of local communities and the serious negative effects this cemetery would have on the environment and nearby residents, we ask the City of San Ramon to officially oppose this project. We also ask San Ramon to reach out to its neighbors that passed resolutions of support for this project in 2005 (Town of Danville, City of Dublin and City of Pleasanton) in hopes that that those cities will also rescind their support and officially oppose the cemetery.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Regards,

Juan Pablo Galván
Land Use Planner

Seth Adams
Land Conservation Director

¹ <https://www.change.org/p/contra-costa-county-board-of-supervisors-deny-the-special-use-permit-for-the-creekside-memorial-park-cemetery>

CC:

Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Candace Andersen, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Town of Danville Town Council
Mr. Joe Calabrigo, Town of Danville
City of Dublin City Council
Mr. Christopher Foss, City of Dublin
City of Pleasanton City Council
Mr. Nelson Fialho, City of Pleasanton